

The Children's Champion

■ In cities, towns and remote villages throughout the world when infants fret or siblings squabble mothers frequently consult a famous pediatrician's book of child care that has provided reassuring, around-the-clock guidance in 29 languages for more than 23 million* families. This fall the book's author, Dr. Benjamin Spock, received the American Academy of Pediatrics' C. Anderson Aldrich

MD

PROFILE

urged parents to be friendly but firm, to appreciate their youngster's needs but to remember that "the spoiled child is not a happy creature even in his own home." It avoided the scolding admonitions of earlier-rearing manuals, and while it advocated flexibility it cautioned parents not to be overly permissive. As early as 1949 in an article in *Pediatrics* Dr. Spock warned that unless extremes in self-regulation and self-expression were prevented they could lead to "a new phase of severity."

Background. Benjamin McLane Spock, whose Dutch ancestors named Spaak settled in the Hudson River Valley before the Revolution, was born in New Haven, May 2, 1903. His father, Benjamin Ives Spock, was general counsel to the New Haven Railroad, and his mother, née Mildred Stoughton, was a highly moralistic parent who insisted that her two sons and four daughters did what was right and not easy. She was so indignant when Ben, the oldest, found an easy summer job that he was shamed into joining instead a section gang in Canada where he worked ten hours a day and taught English to immigrants at night.

He finished high school at Phillips Academy in Andover, entered Yale, became a member of Scroll and Key and rowed on the crew that won the gold medal at the 1924 Olympics in Paris. Originally he planned to be an architect, but as a counselor at a camp for crippled children he realized how much an orthopedic surgeon helped the youngsters and decided to become a doctor. After two years in Yale Medical School he married Jane Davenport Cheney in 1927, transferred to Columbia and graduated first in his class. He interned at Presbyterian Hospital, then served residencies in pediatrics in New York Nursery and Child's Hospital and in psychiatry in New York Hospital and in 1933 he opened a private office.

The first years of practice were

a struggle. It was the depth of the Depression and since he thought his young patients should receive complete physical and psychologic care he devoted two hours to the initial visit. In a few years youngsters were flocking to his office: they thought it fun to climb through the trapdoor that he designed as an approach to the examining table. Their mothers appreciated his concern with the everyday problems of child rearing and his willingness to make house calls that gave him an opportunity to see patients in their total environment.

In the 1930s Dr. Spock was on the pediatrics and psychiatry staffs at Cornell, the physician to the Brearley School, a member of the city health department's teaching staff, and after hours for six years, he trained at the New York Psychoanalytic Institute.

Navy Doctor. The book that made Dr. Spock famous as a baby doctor was written in part while he was a Navy psychiatrist from 1944 to 1946. He started dictating the text to his wife at the Adirondack League Club where he was the summer doctor in 1943 and he worked on it after evening house calls the following winter.

In 1942 he had been rejected by the Navy because he had a spontaneous pneumothorax during his internship, and subsequently two bouts of atypical pneumonia, but in 1944 he was commissioned a lieutenant commander and assigned to the psychiatric service at St. Albans Hospital. The histories of the majority of the cases in the psychopathic ward of the psychiatric service were, he says, "an emphatic education in what emotional neglect of children can do."

In the summer of 1945 Lt. Commander Spock was assigned to "Lion 9," a base hospital preparing for a landing in Japan. On his way to the west coast he indexed the baby book on the troop train and in California he telephoned proof corrections to his wife in New York; because of long delays at the base and the time difference she often received the calls at 2 A.M.



Dr. Spock, winner of the 1970 Aldrich Award, and young friends.

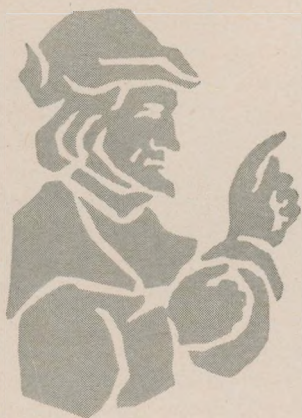
Award† for his writing for young parents, for instructing pediatric residents and establishing a broad program at the Rochester (Minnesota) Child Health Institute.

Dr. Spock's *Baby and Child Care*, published in 1946 and brought up to date each decade, provided practical, common sense advice, encouraged mothers to trust their instincts and bolstered the confidence of neophytes by telling them at the start: "You know more than you think you do." Written in an easy, conversational style it

*The largest sale of an original title ever published in the United States.

†The Award in honor of Dr. Aldrich, the author of *Babies Are Human Beings* is made possible by a grant from Ross Laboratories.

MD's COMPANION



▪ The image of Tusitala, the storyteller, appears to remind *MD* readers that the 1970 edition of *MD's COMPANION* begins on page 81 of this issue. This tenth installment of *MD's* unique fiction magazine-within-a-magazine features three short stories by outstanding authors who are masters in the art of storytelling.

To enhance the physician's reading enjoyment these four selections have been especially illustrated for *MD* by noted artists. Armand Weston designed the illustration for Stanley Ellin's "The Specialty of the House," John Gretzer delightfully depicts Gerald Kersh's "Hey Ho, The Wind and the Rain," and Barry Ross sensitively portrays Henry Slesar's "The Slave."

For a year after the war Dr. Spock practiced again in New York, then joined the staff of the Rochester Child Health Institute and also served on the University of Minnesota faculty and as a consultant to the Mayo Clinic. Four years later he went to Pittsburgh to organize a teaching program in child psychiatry and child development and from 1955 until he retired in 1967 he was professor of child development at Western Reserve.

In one of the studies he directed at Western Reserve mothers about to have their first baby were counseled an hour every other week from the last trimester of pregnancy until the children were several years old. The pediatricians and psychiatrists who were the counselors found that in spite of these frequent individual sessions they were unable to prevent certain problems. They also confirmed their impression that many college educated mothers have difficulty in toilet training their youngsters; because of a fear that they might create toilet-training conflicts mothers keep postponing training with the result that the mothers became frustrated and the youngsters feel inadequate and guilty. Dr. Spock now advises mothers to start train-

ing as soon as a 12 to 18-month toddler shows signs of readiness and then to keep at it in a friendly but firm manner.

In addition to *Baby and Child Care* Dr. Spock has written monthly magazine articles since 1953, a recent *Teenager's Guide to Life and Love* and in cooperation with other authors books on feeding, the care of the disabled child, a baby's first year and a record of his talks to new mothers was issued in 1967. His many papers for professional journals include reports on common diagnostic problems, etiology factors in colic, chronic resistance to sleep in infancy.

Retirement. Since he "retired" because of age Dr. Spock has alternated between a month in the Virgin Islands sailing his ketch, the *Carapace*, and a month in lecturing to university students and other groups in an effort to end the Vietnam^{*} war. He says of his work as a pediatrician-spokesman for peace: "There is a close connection between bringing up children healthy and happy and making a world in which they can stay alive."

The pediatrician who is the hero

of the younger generation is at 67 remarkably youthful and energetic. Tall (6 ft. 4), rangy, impeccably tailored he smiles easily and speaks with a soft New England twang. His base, when he is not sailing or traveling is a small, attractive East Side apartment in New York where he and Mrs. Spock entertain friends and their children. They have two sons, Michael, 37, the director of the Boston Children's Museum, John, 26, an architect, two grandsons and a young granddaughter whose grandpa proudly says is "all girl." Mrs. Spock says her husband was a little stricter than she with their children and Michael remembers that when he came home from college with a beard his father told him he had to shave before he could leave the house.

Some years ago Dr. Spock decried the fact that American children had to be brought up by the latest theories instead of knowledge handed down from generation to generation. He recently said he would like to see "a stable child-rearing tradition so that parents don't have to learn from books." Until such a tradition is established chances are that millions of parents will continue to seek advice from his guidebook.

*In 1969 a conviction on indictment for conspiracy to counsel, aid and abet resistance to the draft was reversed on appeal.